Washington, D.C. – Working families are still suffering from the worst recession since the Great Depression. The last thing they need is higher gas prices. But the “New York Times” reports that gas prices would have to increase to $7 a gallon under the Obama Administration’s proposal to cut greenhouse gas emissions.

The article quotes Harvard scientists who found the cost of driving must increase to achieve the Environmental Protection Agency’s goal to reduce carbon dioxide emissions in the transportation sector by 14 percent from 2005 to 2020.

While global warming is an important issue, it needs to be addressed in balanced and thoughtful manner that does not further weaken our economy by increasing costs on small businesses, hard-working families and seniors living on fixed incomes.

That is why I opposed the cap and trade bill in the House last year. The over-reaching levels of reductions in greenhouse gases mandated by the bill would have killed jobs and significantly increased energy costs on families and employers.

The New York Times

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Fuel Taxes Must Rise, Harvard Researchers Say

By Sindya N. Bhanoo

To meet the Obama administration's targets for cutting greenhouse gas emissions, some researchers say, Americans may have to experience a sobering reality: gas at $7 a gallon.

To reduce carbon dioxide emissions in the transportation sector 14 percent from 2005 levels by 2020, the cost of driving must simply increase, according to a forthcoming report by researchers at Harvard's Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs.

The 14 percent target was set in the Environmental Protection Agency's budget for fiscal 2010.

In their study, the researchers devised several combinations of steps that United States policymakers might take in trying to address the heat-trapping emissions by the nation's transportation sector, which consume 70 percent of the oil used in the United States.

Most of their models assumed an economy-wide carbon dioxide tax starting at $30 a ton in 2010 and escalating to $60 a ton in 2030. In some cases researchers also factored in tax credits for electric and hybrid vehicles, taxes on fuel or both.

In the modeling, it turned out that issuing tax credits could backfire, while taxes on fuel proved beneficial.

"Tax credits don't address how much people use their cars," said Ross Morrow, one of the report's authors. "In reverse, they can make people drive more."

Dr. Morrow, formerly a fellow at the Belfer Center, is a professor of mechanical engineering and economics at Iowa State University

Researchers said that vehicle miles traveled will increase by more than 30 percent between 2010 and 2030 unless policymakers increase fuel taxes.